

## SHAKESPEARE'S OPHELIA.

BY PAMELA HELEN GOODWIN.

SHAKESPEARE has given no finer exhibition of his masterly genius than in the drama of "Hamlet." This is manifested, not only in the fact that the hero is drawn so true to life as to be invested with its mystery and ambiguity—so that physicians, centuries after, take a diagnosis of his case, and pronounce it to be one of veritable madness, while metaphysicians, seizing the scalpel, dissect each mental faculty, and declare his tragic life to be the warfare of intellect and passions with the moral perceptions of the soul,—it is not only, we say, in the centering of every action around the character of Hamlet that the wonderful ability of Shakespeare is revealed; but also in that remarkable power of his mind that can call into independent being, by a few faint touches of his word-wand, characters of as distinct individuality. Such a one is Ophelia—one of the fairest, saddest lives that have ever stepped into the shadowy realm of thought.

Hamlet may be the commanding monarch of the forest, shivered by the lightning-stroke of too keen susceptibility of the guiltiness of others; but Ophelia is the forest-flower, of exquisite rarity of tint and fragrance, over which we bend in admiration and love; yet which is torn from its native soil, and left to wither by the same rude shaft that made the towering oak a ruin.

Only a few brief moments does Ophelia come before us. There are scarcely more than four scenes given in which to reveal the beauty of her life, before the wanderings of a blighted intellect make us welcome, as a relief, the still form in its peaceful slumberings. Yet her few words reflect, as in a polished mirror, the purity of her

character; and her silence tells still more eloquently of a depth of nature capable of suffering too intensely for expression. Excepting through the interpretation of our own consciousness, we are left in ignorance of the storm and sunshine that varied her inner world, and of the fury of the final thunder-bolts that left it a desolate waste forever.

In all the delineations of Ophelia that have come under my notice, she is presented as a being too soft and tender to have any strength of character or individuality of nature—beautiful, but purely passive. Mrs. Jamieson thus bewails:

"Ophelia, poor Ophelia! O, far too soft, too good, too fair, to be cast among the briars of this working-day world, and fall and bleed upon the thorns of life." "She is so young, that neither her mind nor her person has attained maturity; she is not aware of the nature of her own feelings; they are prematurely developed in their full force before she has strength to bear them."

A writer in the *Speculative Philosophy*, of October, 1873, in an article on "Hamlet," makes these statements concerning Ophelia:

"We feel from the first that she is too weak to endure the contradictions of life. Her whole nature is embraced in the word *love*. She has no individuality of her own; she is wholly wrapped up in the father and lover." "Ophelia perished through her beauty; that which forms the strongest charm of her character is what makes her greatest weakness. Ophelia is all trust, all dependence upon others; there is no trace of selfishness or self-reliance even; hence the loveliness of her character, but, alas! her utter frailty."

I reject the imputation of weakness and sentimental softness, and that vine-like, hot-house

frailty that withers at the first blast of misfortune. True, I compared her to a flower; but it was the delicately perfumed and exquisitely tinted wild-flower, over which storms of wind and rain may pass, serving only to enhance its beauty; but which requires the shaft that splinters the protecting trees to uproot it from its bed. Her whole nature may be embraced in the word *love*; but not that word taken in its narrowest signification. Love is comprehensive of all that is most noble, virtuous, and unselfish in human character, and to be an embodiment of unselfishness does not exclude the highest self-reliance. It requires self-reliance, strength of will, and moral fortitude to heed the voice of duty, and withstand the pleadings of absorbing affection. It requires strength of self-control to hide conflicting emotions, and, in the most trying circumstances, present to the gaze of others ever the same unselfish simplicity and devotion. But let us turn to the text for proof of these statements.

The first scene is a parting between brother and sister. Laertes had returned to his home from France, evidently at the request of his father—Polonius, Lord Chamberlain of the king—in order to attend the wedding of that monarch with the recently widowed queen. After earnest solicitation, he obtains permission to return. The scene of parting is a room in the house of Polonius; and hither Laertes comes, just before sailing, to give his last words to the sister who is dearest of all he leaves behind. We can easily imagine the arm thrown endearingly around her form as he makes the affectionate request, that, with every favoring breeze, she shall not sleep until she has written to him; and Ophelia replies, from the fullness of her love, "Do you doubt that?" Then Laertes, looking into those truthful eyes, bethinks this the most fitting opportunity to speak upon a subject of long solicitude to him. He says:

"For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favors,  
Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood;  
A violet in the youth of primy nature;  
Forward, not permanent; sweet, not lasting;  
The perfume and suppliance of a minute,—  
No more."

In Ophelia's answer we see the shadowings of surprise, and a struggle between firm faith in her lover and confidence in the wisdom of her brother. Moreover, it is an instance of her power of self-control that, at the very moment when the strongest feelings of her heart must have arisen in defense, she should only say, questioningly, "No more but so?" Laertes, in his reply, reveals so much knowledge of the world, so much discriminating wisdom, so much

true interest in her welfare, that we approve the deference with which she listens. It begins:

"Think it no more;

For nature crescent does not grow alone  
In thews and bulk; but as this temple waxes,  
The inward service of the mind and soul  
Grows wide withal," etc.

Laertes continues, but does not reflect for a moment on the honesty of Hamlet. He may love her now with the purest intentions; but she must remember that his sphere in life is above hers. His will can not be entirely his own, but must be subject to his birth. If he says he loves her, she must only give credence to that which can be borne out in deed, and that depends to some extent upon the voice of his country. She must fear losing her own heart, and must keep in the rear of her affection, lest she, like many others, fall a victim, or lest calumnious tongues blast her fair reputation.

"Be wary, then; but safety lies in fear:  
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near."

Fair words; keen logic. But who can say to the affections, "Thus far, no farther?" The will may imprison and build a wall which no human eye can penetrate; but love itself can not be fettered.

Ophelia does not tell Laertes that already she loves Hamlet with all the strength of her pure nature. How could she, when his words had just revealed so clearly that all youthful love might be outgrown, and when every word he had said about caution appealed so forcibly to her instinctive modesty? So, like the loving sister that she was, she answers without argument, though with a dignity that veils whatever tumult is within, and which most effectually refutes all assertions that she is a merely passive creature, destitute of original thought:

"I shall the effect of thy good counsel keep  
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,  
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,  
Show me the steep and thorny path to heaven,  
Whilst, like a puffed and reckless libertine,  
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,  
And recks not his own read."

Here Polonius enters unexpectedly, and, surprised at finding Laertes, who, as he supposed, was already on his journey, he hastens his departure, pronounces a second blessing, and gives him an abundance more of good advice. Laertes, with a last hand-clasp, says:

"Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well  
What I have said to you.  
"Oph. "T is in my memory locked,  
And you yourself shall keep the key of it."

Now, Polonius had one great failing, if no more, and that was a most irresistible curiosity, which in many cases amounted to offensive meddlesomeness, unworthy of a courtier, and

which ultimately led directly to his death. Breaking in upon this parting scene, he had heard some words, the drift of which he could not quite understand. Of course, he must know :

"*Pol.* What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

"*Oph.* So please you, something concerning the Lord Hamlet."

This candid answer suddenly recalls some hints that Polonius had heard. He had not been very observing himself, but had been told that the Lord Hamlet was spending a great deal of time with his daughter of late, and that she had received him fair and courteously. He asks her for the truth. Ophelia is not only an affectionate sister, she is also a dutiful daughter. The tender chords of her soul had been kindly and skillfully touched by her brother, and they had vibrated sadly but accordantly. She did not know what it would be to have a hand ruthlessly sweep over them, and that a father's hand. Even if she had, I think it would have made no difference in the simple truthfulness of her answer :

"*Oph.* He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders Of his affection to me.

"*Pol.* Affection! Pish! you speak like a green girl, Unsifted in such perilous circumstance. Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?"

This question does not come with the wakening of a surprise. Her brother's words are too forcibly in her mind; and doubt—"the twilight of the soul"—dims the brightness of their youthful love. Her answer reveals the pain of uncertainty :

"I do not know, my lord, what I *should* think."

With that, Polonius blurts forth, in a coarse, passionate way, showing at once the obtuseness of his nature, and his utter lack of appreciation of his daughter's feelings. He calls her a baby, foolishly taking for true pay that which was only counterfeit, and endeavors to add force to his words by a low, indelicate comparison. This bold accusation and reflection on the honor of her admirer rouses her to self-defense, and speedily dissipates, for the time being, her doubts and indecision. She answers firmly, but not angrily, showing she is not so clinging but that when necessary she can stand erect :

"*Oph.* My lord, he hath importuned me with love In honorable fashion.

"*Pol.* Ay, fashion, you may call it; go to, go to.

"*Oph.* And hath given countenance to his speech, My lord, with all the vows of heaven."

Doubtless Polonius was unused to seeing his loving daughter thus roused. His unreasonable, passionate language changes somewhat, although he will not listen to the suit. He commands that she shall not believe a word of Hamlet's vows, that she must not see him, and

must remember that he is young, and must walk in a larger sphere than hers. His vows are only

"Implorations of unholy suits,  
Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,  
The better to beguile. This for all—  
I would not, in p'ain terms, from this time forth  
Have you so slander any moment's leisure,  
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.  
Look to't, I charge you. Come your ways."

The head is bowed in obedience, and she retires from his presence.

From all that is given to develop the character of Polonius, I do not think we need consider him tyrannical, or ambitious to carry out some plan even at the sacrifice of his daughter's happiness. Being prime minister to the king, he seems very anxious to do his duty in every particular. Neither need we think in this devotedness he was actuated by any hope of ignoble reward, nor that he knew more of the king's guilt than the rest of the subjects. Instead of being anxious to have his daughter win the position which the sincere love of Hamlet would offer, and his own high station and faithfulness might render possible, he strove to nip the outgrowth in its tender bud, lest suspicion might rest upon the purity of his motives. As he afterward told the king in conference :

"What might you,  
Or my dear majesty, your queen here, think,  
If I had played the desk, or table-book,  
Or given my heart a winking mate or dumb,  
Or looked upon this love with idle sight—  
What might you think? No: I went round to work,  
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:  
'Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy star;  
This must not be.'"

He has no lack of loyalty, but, like many another father, he has no spiritual insight into the finely tuned being placed under his care, and hence no perception of his higher trusts.

There is no presentation of the state of Ophelia's feelings after she turns from that interview to the solitude of her apartment; that, like the drama of most lives, is left hidden from the eyes of men, excepting when the too plainly marked outgrowth tells the story of those silent hours. Her brother Laertes is gone. The path he pointed out looked thorny in the distance; but scarcely had his "farewell!" ceased to quiver on the air, ere the rude points entered her soul. She is too true to her father to oppose his expressed command, or even for an instant to seek to evade its requirement. A gulf of separation yawns between herself and Hamlet, yet she will never seize a plank to bridge it. No mother's gentle heart was there to share her burden, to soothe and comfort; alone she must abide her fate. If she was so weak as to sink beneath the first cruel blow of misfortune,

then would her intellect have reeled beneath this stroke. But, instead, her strong self-reliance and unselfishness come to her aid. Her thoughts we can not think are centered on self; she would scarcely be a woman if she did not seriously consider the effect this change would produce upon her suitor. Her father had placed around her external barriers in his commands; but Laertes, with his kindly, truthful reasonings, has even more effectually bound her spirit by doubt. Not that she distrusted the purity of Hamlet's intentions when he uttered those "music vows," but when the apparently insurmountable barriers are so distinctly pointed out, and, more than all, the truth that even the most passionate love of youth sometimes grows cold, I think it could scarcely be otherwise than that the cloud that overshadowed the future trailed its chill folds across her soul. Moreover, did not duty to her lover demand compliance with her father's words? This youthful attachment, for Hamlet's own good, must be broken off. Should she lead him on to take a position that might bring upon him the censure of others, and perhaps seriously endanger his future prospects? It would only make matters worse to give any explanation. In the heat of his youthful affection, the hint that she considered herself beneath him in station would only precipitate his rashness.

Such may have been the course of her reasonings; for when Hamlet comes again to see her, according to his custom, he is refused admittance. He comes again, but with no better success. Then he writes; the letter is returned unopened. He writes again, but all in vain; she will neither hear him nor see him. Is there no strength here manifested? no moral fortitude? She can resist these importunities for the considerable time that must have elapsed before the next scene, and not even request her father to permit a single interview for explanation; she can read his former words that, in their appropriateness, seemed written for such an occasion:

"Doubt thou the stars are fire;  
Doubt that the sun doth move;  
Doubt truth to be a liar;  
But never doubt I love.

"O, dear Ophelia. I am ill at these numbers; I have not art to reckon my groans; but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.  
HAMLET."

And wherefore? The answer is, Self-abnegation for the good of another—the sentiment that has led other gentle beings to perform the most painful acts of heroism, and to immolate themselves for others' sakes.

Time passed, and there are no further importunities; but absence and silence: and—strange

inconsistency of love—this silence gives her new suffering.

There is a certain strength and comfort that arises from self-denial, especially when there is an unbreathed hope that mutual suffering will in some way purify the dross of affection so that, it may be, as a reward, the heavenly powers will intervene in some way, and bring two faithful hearts together. But chilling silence freezes even this comfort, and the conviction slowly settles down upon Ophelia that her suspicions are indeed well-founded. She no longer reads over those letters, but folds them up with a shudder, "their perfume lost when givers prove unkind," and "longs to redeliver." Such is her state of mind when the two culminating scenes of interest in her life take place, in order to understand which it is necessary to gain some insight into Hamlet's thoughts on this subject.

If we find it difficult to read the pure-hearted Ophelia, the difficulties multiply many-fold when we approach the mind of Hamlet. So intricate is the maze, that scarcely two persons ever wind through it in the same path, and come out upon the same view, if indeed one is fortunate to go through it himself twice in the same way. However, there are three leading opinions concerning his character, one of which we must accept. Either Hamlet is sane during the whole drama, or he is insane during the whole, or he becomes insane at some stage of its progress, and which view we take will affect our understanding of his treatment of Ophelia.

It is my opinion that his insanity is feigned, and that during the entire play he does not pass beyond the limits of responsibility. This view is maintained by many of the best authorities, and yet with this view I have seen no satisfactory explanation of his conduct toward Ophelia. Goethe thinks his insanity feigned, and yet finds his treatment toward Ophelia inexplicable. Perhaps I should not hope to succeed where one so eminent has failed; and yet I have an explanation that satisfies me for the present. We can not dwell upon the severe and sudden afflictions that come upon Hamlet in quick succession, although they must be comprehended as fully as possible. With a gifted, susceptible, contemplative temperament, cultivated by careful study in a German university; with a warmly affectionate heart, a keen sense of propriety and honor, and a soul of the strictest conscientiousness, the mysterious death of his father must have filled him with the deepest grief; but to this is added the intense bitterness of his mother's disgrace by the "o'erhasty marriage" with an uncle in every way inferior to his father; the harrowing but persistent suspicions of

villainy perpetrated,—surely this were enough to bear down a mind to the lowest depths of suffering. But more is waiting. In the very midst of these afflictions, just when he needs the sympathy of a woman's loving heart, a most inexplicable coldness cuts him off from the only being who could give him relief from his immense burden.

The view might be taken that Hamlet, though never deliberately insincere, felt for Ophelia only a youth's attachment, and that when these severe shocks came upon him they suddenly matured him into manhood, and revealed his love for Ophelia to be as evanescent as the morning dew. This opinion might find support from the fact that, in all his soliloquizing, he never refers to Ophelia, and makes no expression of his love excepting at the grave scene, and this he afterward speaks of slightly as "a mad freak." Still I do not maintain this view, because it seems so incongruous with the whole nature of Hamlet, making him capable of the most refined cruelty toward one whose innocence and devotion, if they could not keep his special regard, must have commanded his respect and pity.

No: he loved, and for him to love was not to give a moderate affection. Ophelia's unaccountable behavior, savoring so strongly of faithlessness, coming when every other stay for his soul had broken, and especially when the mother, whom he had considered the most loving of beings, had proved so worse than faithless to the memory of her noble husband, must have chilled him with its cold unkindness, and could naturally be attributed to fickleness and inconstancy, until, with an added bitterness, he could exclaim:

"Frailty, thy name is woman!"

That this distrust of Ophelia did not come until after repeated attempts to obtain some other explanation, argues well for the nature that could have impressed him so tenaciously with its truthfulness.

The last fountain of former joys has turned into a bitter pool in the wilderness, when the ghost—his vague suspicions crystallized, or whatever else it may typify—gives him a mission of revenge. Then all the powers of his soul are bent upon his plans. He must avenge his father's murder, and he will mask his operations under the guise of insanity. But he must have some apparent cause for insanity other than the death of his father, lest it rouse too much the king's apprehensions. Love, thwarted, sometimes leads to insanity, and it is generally known that of late the current of his love had

not been running very smooth. Here, then, should be the apparent cause, grasped the more eagerly because of the keen rebuke he could thrust home to the inconstant fair one. Accordingly, after a time, he breaks through the sanctity of private apartments, and rushes into the presence of Ophelia. She, startled by his wild and unseemly appearance, stands speechless, and as soon as he turns away hastens into her father's room. Polonius, seeing her agitated look, as soon as possible dismisses his visitors, and earnestly desires to know the cause.

"*Oph.* My lord, as I was sewing in my chamber, Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced, No hat upon his head, his stocking soiled, Ungartered and down-gyved to his ankle, Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other, And with a look so piteous in purport As if he had been loosed out of hell To speak of horrors, comes before me.

"*Pol.* Mad for thy love?

"*Oph.* My lord, I do not know, But truly do I fear it.

"*Pol.* What said he?

"*Oph.* He took me by the wrist, and held me hard; Then gins he to the length of his whole arm, And with his other hand thus, o'er his brow, He falls to such perusal of my face As he would draw it. Long stayed he so. At last—a little shaking of mine arm, And thrice his head thus waving up and down, He raised a sigh so piteous and profound That it did seem to shatter all his bulk, And end his being. 'That done, he lets me go: And with his head over his shoulder turned He seemed to find his way without his eyes, For out of doors he went without their help, And to the last bended their light on me.

"*Pol.* Go with me. I will go seek the king."

Here again we are struck with that self-control that could endure, without shriek or fainting, the seizing of both hands in the firm grasp of an apparent madman, and maintain such poise of nerve as to keep the same quiet position until he had retreated.

It is evident, before this scene, that the king had mentioned to Polonius something concerning the changed demeanor of Hamlet, and that the suspicion of madness had already suggested itself. The queen had feared that it was his father's death and her untimely marriage, and the king's guilty conscience had feared even more. Polonius is sure, now, that the secret is in his keeping; but with it comes a fear that censure might rest upon him as the indirect cause. He repents his hasty judgments, and hurriedly asks his daughter if she had given him any "hard words?" No: she had but obeyed, "dispelled his letters, and denied him access." He hopes that the relief afforded the royal pair, in the knowledge that they are not chargeable with the madness of their son, will be quite sufficient to turn blame from his actions. He asks other proof from Ophelia of Hamlet's

love, and receives the letters, and then they presented to the king's residence. The news is presented in a dexterous manner, and the minister is not disappointed in seeing the willingness manifested to receive any cause that would screen their guiltiness; but their very gladness makes the royal couple skeptical. Even the letters were not sufficient; so Polonius makes arrangement that Ophelia and Hamlet shall meet unexpectedly, and they three, screened from observation, shall mark the interview. Ophelia understands it to be a test of her lover's sanity, and consents. Hamlet does not know of the innocent plot, but plays his part; and while he flavors his speech with the incoherence of madness, there is much he intends to be cutting truth concerning his lady's fickleness. She marks him coming, rapt in meditation, and repeating aloud his thoughts. He sees her, stops, and speaks with so much of the old-time courteousness that, for a moment, she loses sight of the mad apparition, and the former conviction of his evanescent affection rises uppermost; but as he continues speaking, this thought, painful as it is, dies away before the terrible certainty of his madness, and that she is in some way the cause. As the interest in Ophelia's life culminates here, we must quote the passages at length:

"*Ham.* . . . The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons  
Be all my sins remembered

"*Oph.* Good my lord,

How does your honor for this many a day?

"*Ham.* I humbly thank you, well, well, well.

"*Oph.* My lord, I have remembrances of yours  
That I have long'd long to redeliver.  
I pray you now receive them.

"*Ham.* No, no! I never gave you aught.

"*Oph.* My honored lord, I know right well you did;  
And, with them, words of so sweet breath conjured  
As made the things more rich. Their perfume lost,  
Take these again: for to the noble mind  
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.  
I here, my lord.

"*Ham.* Ha, ha! are you honest?

"*Oph.* My lord!

"*Ham.* Are you fair?

"*Oph.* What means your lordship?

"*Ham.* That if you be honest, and fair, your honesty should  
admit no discourse to your beauty.

"*Oph.* Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than  
with honesty?

"*Ham.* Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner trans-  
form honesty from what it is to a bawd, than the force of honesty  
can translate beauty into his likeness; this was sometime a  
paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

"*Oph.* Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

"*Ham.* You should not have believed me; for virtue can not  
so inoculate the old stock but we shall relish of it. I loved you  
not.

"*Oph.* I was the more deceived.

"*Ham.* Get thee to a nunnery. . . . What should such  
followers as I do, crawling between heaven and earth? We are  
arrant knaves, all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nun-  
nery. Where's thy father?

"*Oph.* At home, my lord.

"*Ham.* Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play  
the fool nowhere but in his own house. Farewell.

"*Oph.* O, help him, you sweet heavens!

"*Ham.* If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy  
dowry: Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not  
escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go; farewell. Or, if  
thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well  
enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go;  
and quickly too. Farewell.

"*Oph.* O, heavenly powers, restore him!

"*Ham.* I have heard of your paintings too, well enough.  
God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another;  
you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures,  
and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no  
more on't. It hath made me mad. . . . (*Exit Hamlet.*)"

The anguish of the maiden's heart breaks forth, the first and only time, in words; but they are burning words that tell of molten depths repressed:

"*Oph.* O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!

The courtier's, scholar's, soldier's eye, tongue, sword;

The expectancy and rose of the fair state;

The glass of fashion and the mold of form;

The observed of all observers,—quite, quite down!

And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,

That sucked the honey of his music vows,

Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,

Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh;

That unmatched form, and feature of blown youth,

Blasted with ecstasy. O, woe is me!

To have seen what I have seen, see what I see."

The rest is soon told. She sees Hamlet the same evening for the last time. He seeks her side to throw, under his feigned ravings, every epithet that seems admissible against the brevity of woman's love. Ophelia unresentingly suffers in silence, believing his words only a part of that noble wreck. But in the silence of the night her woes come trooping up, when no longer the stern will stands guard to the avenues of emotion, and she must confront the terrible reality. Insane with ecstasy! that princely being for whose welfare she would have given her life and every hope of happiness—blasted through her fidelity to duty—her own great sacrifice! The heroically enduring nature is breaking beneath the horror of a rayless despair, when the ghastly image of her father, slain by the hand of her mad lover, causes the brain to reel from its support. The morning light finds her motherless, almost brotherless, fatherless, loverless; and the delicate mechanism that holds the balance between the rational and irrational is irrecoverably lost. Her ravings are painful to us because of the shattered loveliness they reflect. Even nature proves treacherous to her trust. She is drowned because of the giving way of the branch she hoped would bear her weight; then trusting the element that received her, while the buoyancy of her clothing delays the work of death, she sings her sweetly mournful song, until it is hushed by the gurgling waters. Nor is that all that seems

adverse. She is denied the prayers and holy rites of burial. Even the royal mandate that demands them can not still the murmurings of the priest. We feel a kindred rebuke rise to our lips to the one Laertes gives :

“ I tell thee, churlish priest,  
A ministering spirit shall my sister be,  
When thou liest howling.”

The queen scatters the flowers into the grave ; but even then the sheltering bosom of the earth is not allowed to shield, until one more fierce scene of discord is enacted over, her cold remains. But at last we hear the dust-clouds rattle on the coffin, and we know that Ophelia's history and woes are ended, though her beautiful womanly character lives on to charm the ages.

## SHAKSPERE, FROM AN AMERICAN POINT OF VIEW.\*

THIS elegantly-printed volume, published in England, though by an American author, has for its subject four distinct lines of inquiry; two of these—the validity of a theory which originated in this country a few years ago, that Bacon, Lord Verulam, really wrote the plays known as Shakspeare's; and, secondly, the extent of Shakspeare's legal knowledge—though carried through the work, are subordinate to the other two—the anti-democratic tone of the dramatist and the fact that he was a Catholic. These are the real issues of the book. ~~Mr. Wilkes~~ holds that Shakspeare should not exert the influence in this country that he does in England, ~~and he arraigns him at the bar of American~~ public opinion to answer the indictment that he is always a strenuous upholder of royal authority, an advocate of the privileges of the nobility, regarding them as far removed above the *ignobile vulgus*, for whom on all occasions the poet manifests the utmost contempt. That a work teeming with constant lessons of this character is no fit guide for Americans he makes the real argument of his book. The second count is apparently intended to be no less damaging. Shakspeare was a Catholic, and as such should exercise no influence on a Protestant community. His influence in England for three hundred years has

not apparently won that country back to Catholicity, and the United States are probably as safe. Still, it may serve for a new agitation to get up a cry: "No Shakspeare in the public schools!"

That Mr. Wilkes considers it a danger is seen by the fact that he uses toward Catholics every vile nickname drawn from the slums by religious hate to degrade us in the eyes of our fellow-men. Yet surely a Shakspearean scholar should not need reminding that to rob one of his good name is worse than stealing his purse, oft-times as bad as taking his life. Not only this, but he more than once represents the Catholic Church as actuated by a hatred of intense fury against the Jews, as an earnest upholder of the unlawful claims of aristocracy, as an enemy of popular rights, and as an excuser of perjury. While thus under a strong anti-Catholic bias or prejudice—stronger even than he at all conceives—he has attempted to understand Catholic terms and usages, and to enter into that world which to Protestants seems so strange and inconceivable—the world of Catholic thought.

✕ The question as to the religious convictions of Shakspeare is not a new one. No Catholic has ever read the great dramatist without feeling that he was strangely lacking in the usual anti-Catholic element, even if he did not impress him as often Catholic in thought.

Catholic writers in English periodicals, such as the *Rambler* and others, had already claimed Shak-

\* *Shakspeare, from an American Point of View: including an Inquiry as to his Religious Faith and his Knowledge of Law, with the Baconian Theory considered.* By George Wilkes. London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington. 1877. 8vo, pp. ix. 471.



sphere as a Catholic. All evidence, extrinsic and intrinsic, seems to sustain the position. His family belonged to the gentry on the father's and mother's side, and on both sides had adhered to Catholicity after the change of religion in England. The will of his maternal grandfather, Robert Arden, who died in 1556, is distinctly Catholic: "I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, and to our Blessed Lady St. Mary, and to all the holy company of heaven." Of his father there is still extant a *Testament of the Soul* (not, as Mr. Wilkes supposes, a form drawn up by some chaplain of the family, but that *Testamentum Animæ Christianæ* which, in Latin and the vernacular, has for centuries been found in Catholic devotional manuals, and the copying of which, as a kind of formal act, has been maintained in many families—certainly was in the family of the present writer down to the nineteenth century. Shakspeare's father, too, was fined for non-attendance at the established church. So far as the families of his parents were concerned, he was evidently Catholic, and must in childhood have been familiar with the thoughts and language of English Catholics. How far in mature age he retained the impressions of youth, or how faithful he may have been to the teachings of his religion, we have no means of judging. The lightness with which moral obligations lay on him, his career as a wild but gifted man, give little ground for supposing him to have practised the religion he may still have professed.

In his dramas Shakspeare constantly uses Catholic terms, speaks of Catholic clergy, religious of both sexes, rites and ceremonies with respect, and in many cases turns

his ridicule upon the new order of clergy in England. The Shaksperes and Ardens had both held office under the Tudor kings, and the dramatist shows the utmost zeal for royal power as against the Pope. To a Catholic, now, this gives his position at once. His life was not a regular one; and he could scarcely, in those days of persecution, have been a firm, consistent, practical Catholic, although he clung to the faith, never abjured it, and had no liking for any of the new forms. His Bible reading was in the Protestant versions of the day, not in the Rheims and Douay, of which no influence has ever been detected in his plays. That he died a good Catholic needs proof; but Mr. Wilkes' ideas of the meaning of the term are vague, since he tells us that Henry VIII. died a good Catholic.

The fact that Shakspeare makes his characters—most of whom are Catholics in time or country—speak as Catholics is really no proof of his own Catholicity, any more than Longfellow's almost constant correctness in his use of Catholic terms and familiarity with Catholic thought is proof that he is a Catholic. The fact is, we admit, suspicious; for during centuries Protestant writers seem to have made it a point to display the most intense ignorance of Catholic terms, usages, rites, and ceremonies, and equally a point to insist on talking about what they vaunt their ignorance of. But, going back to Shakspeare's time, we must bear in mind that the new religion had not yet taken any hold on the people at large; that the only religious terms and expressions that conveyed any definite ideas to their minds were those of the old faith sanctioned by the usage of centuries, and that the terms intro-

only in the form of an oath, except in one instance, to which Mr. Wilkes devotes a chapter. Juliet, going to her confessor, asks :

"Are you at leisure, holy father, now,  
Or shall I come to you at evening Mass?"

Mr. Wilkes goes into a lengthened argument to show that it was the custom at that time in England to celebrate Mass at night. He says: "I have found many illustrations from Catholic reviews and other reliable authorities of the practices of the hedge-priests, as they were called, in times of Catholic persecution, whose business it was to go in the darkness of the evening to the houses of the faithful to celebrate a nocturnal Mass." We should be much pleased to see any such authorities. He cites only an article in the *Manhattan Monthly* last year, where a writer speaks of priests in Ireland "who often at dead of night fled to the mountain cave, the wooded glen, and wild rath to celebrate Mass for the faithful"; but travelling by night is one thing, and saying Mass at night is another. Again, there were no priests in England answering to the Irish hedge-priests. The priests in England found shelter in the houses of Catholic gentry; they had not a mass of poor and oppressed faithful among whom they lived. But neither in Ireland nor in England is there a single example that the writer has ever found of a Mass said in what may be called the evening—that is, between sunset and midnight—much less of its being so frequent an occurrence as to make Shakspeare refer to evening Mass as an ordinary matter. Dodd's *History of the Church*, Challoner's *Missionary Priests*, the works of Father Parsons, Campion, and other

To convey religious ideas in Shakspeare's time, the readiest words were those familiar to the people. The dramatist employs them with no regard to the country or time. The pagan Hamlet refers to the Blessed Sacrament, Extreme Unction, the Mass, and Office for the Dead; they talk of confession and beads in the *Comedy of Errors*; of indulgences in the *Tempest*, and even in *Troilus and Cressida*; of fasting days in *Pericles* and *Coriolanus*; and christening is spoken of in *Titus Andronicus*. The anachronisms were apparently not noticed in his time, nor taken into account.

The system had not been adopted of entirely ignoring Catholic terms; there were no others, and Shakspeare used what he had. One word seems to be avoided. The Mass is introduced only like Moore's "neat little Testament, just kept to swear by." It occurs

Catholic writers of the time, never allude to any single case where such a Mass was said. Nor is there in any liturgical work reference to any such custom ever having obtained in England.

Mr. Wilkes seems to feel that the theory is not very solid. He next refers to the custom in some parts of saying a Low Mass immediately after the Sunday High Mass. "Shakspeare may have considered the last or one o'clock Mass an evening Mass." The play itself makes this untenable. It was late in the afternoon when Juliet went to the friar. When she comes back the nurse says:

"See where she comes from shrift with merry look"—

not half as charmingly as Longfellow describes Evangeline as most beautiful

"When, after confession,  
Homeward serenely she walks with God's benediction upon her."

Then, a few lines lower down, Lady Capulet, in the same scene, says:

" 'Tis now near night."

This fixes the time too clearly to allow that any reference is made to a Mass about mid-day. "Evening Mass" is simply nonsense; but the phrase has charmed later writers, and several poets introduce the expression, just as poets and prose writers have all copied the Protestant Bible misprint, "Strain at a gnat," instead of "Strain out a gnat."

But the word Mass here is against all Catholic custom and reason. Juliet wishes to go to confession. She politely asks her confessor whether he is at leisure or whether she shall come again at a later hour. Would any one, under the same circumstances, propose to

come to confession to the priest when he was saying Mass? It would be just the time when he could not possibly hear confessions. If he expected to say Mass soon, he would hear her then, and neither he nor she would think of putting it off till he had begun his Mass. Shakspeare critics have boggled and blundered over this without seeing this incongruity, which to a Catholic is as patent as the day. What, then, does it mean? Juliet can ask only whether he will hear her then or whether she shall come later. Now, if we consider Shakspeare to have written:

"Are you at leisure, holy father, now,  
Or shall I come to you as evening wanes?"

the whole thing is as natural, consistent, and usual to Catholic ideas as can be. Then there is no such absurdity as evening Mass, or going to confession to a priest who is saying Mass. The dense ignorance of later times on every Catholic matter will easily account for the neglect to correct the palpable error in the actual text.

The fact that, while Shakspeare speaks of religion as the monastic state, religious, monks, nuns, convents, monasteries, beads, penance, month's mind, dirge, requiem, purgatory, indulgences, relics, shrines, the housel (Eucharist), christening or baptism, aneling (anointing), the cross, altar, holy-water, he nowhere in any of his plays speaks of the Mass (except in the oath "By the Mass"), is a strong argument against its use here. Convents and monasteries were abolished; relics and shrines were gone; no dirges or requiems resounded in the old church walls; allusions to them were simply allusions to something deemed past and gone; but there were nearly a thousand Mass-priests in

England—men who carried their lives in their hands, over whom the severest edicts of the law were hanging like the sword of Damocles. To talk of the Mass as a service with respect was verging on high treason. Having avoided it everywhere else, he would scarcely introduce it here absurdly—no less absurdly to him than to us.

At that time, though the government was anti-Catholic, the state church was a mere matter of office. There was little zeal in its members—little more than conformity to law. The Puritans were active and zealous in spreading their doctrines; but the people were to a great extent still Catholic, and, with many nobles and gentlemen as leaders, and a greater number of priests than during the next two centuries, formed a power which was finally crushed by the Civil War. With this body Shakspeare sympathized. He was not of the stuff to make a martyr. Ben Jonson and Massinger were, we know, Catholics, but not a single act of Shakspeare's is recorded that stamps him as a Catholic. He was not fined as a recusant, had no intercourse with known Catholics, in all arrests under the penal laws there is no allusion to him, even as using his undoubted influence with the great to shield some poor victim. With the mass of the people, at court and not at court, he ridiculed the new Gospellers, as we do Millerites or any other oddities. Against royal supremacy or the religion established by law, the Common Prayer, or the bishops who had been intruded into the old Catholic sees, Shakspeare says nothing. His ridicule is never launched at them. His wit is turned, as was that of the court circle, at the Puritan element. The state church was respectable,

but lacked earnestness, piety, and zeal: it was simply a state affair. Those whose minds and imaginations tended to effusive piety found themselves repulsed. Gradually they camped apart and formed new organizations. In Shakspeare's time the government and the government church laughed at them, when they should have used them to build up the Church of England. Just so in the following century they repulsed Wesley. Shakspeare takes not a Catholic but the court-prelatic side; and there were no prophets on that side to see that James' son was to die on the block and the Church of England be abolished by these very Puritans. That he had any direct idea of attacking Protestantism as a system, or making his dramas—with their coarse and often impure speech, such as then\* found favor with Elizabeth and her court—an arm against the Reformation, is absurd, and Mr. Wilkes, in going through play after play to note every praise of convents or religious practices as done with a direct view to elevate the Catholic Church, is extravagant. We have but to remember that Protestantism had then no institutions, no religious rites or practices, nothing absolutely for a poet or dramatist to employ as illustrations. Protestant poets and artists feel the poverty to this day, and in despair turn from cold, set formalism to Catholic themes, where poetry finds so many a subject.

Our American critic has endeavored to follow out Catholic thoughts, but not always successfully. Thus, in *Richard III.* Elizabeth addressing her murdered children :

" If yet your gentle souls fly in the air,"

and Buckingham :

"If that your moody discontented souls  
Do through the clouds behold this present hour,"

are gravely put down as evidences of Shakspeare's recognition of the doctrine of purgatory, as though every believer in ghosts must be a believer in purgatory. There are some comical remarks about Shakspeare's familiarity with "the intricacies of the Roman Catholic faith," because in *Henry VI.* we find:

"Although by sight his sin be multiplied,"

when surely the Scriptural injunction to pluck out an eye that leads one to sin might explain it without his getting tangled in intricacies. His knowledge of the marriage service also seems peculiar; the rituals we know are hardly the origin of Shakspeare's marriage form.

Mr. Wilkes is evidently led away by his theory in his forced Catholic interpretation of many passages of the dramatist; and his desire to show that the whole series of dramas was a device of the Catholic Church to attack Protestantism in England induces him to strain much to support his view, and often to jump at unwarranted conclusions, as in making Hartley, in the strange Girachy case, to have been a priest. A man might be hanged as a Catholic priest—as Ury was a century ago within sight of the spot where Mr. Wilkes' office now stands—and yet not have been even a Catholic. There is no Catholic record of priest or layman suffering in connection with this affair.

Hence, while we admit Mr. Wilkes' diligence and ability in studying Shakspeare, we must regret that his judgment, like that of too many, has been warped by the old anti-Catholic feeling, to the extent of giving the plays a character which neither friend nor foe of Catholicity

at the time dreamed of ascribing to them.

In treating the question of Shakspeare's legal knowledge, he is free from bias, and hence easily perceives and often exposes the exaggeration which induces learned men of the law to interpret much that any attendant at courts, whether as witness or juror, might easily acquire as proof of serious legal study. The length to which the legal argument has been pushed has led to similar claims by other professions; but a young man of such Catholic stock as Shakspeare undoubtedly was could scarcely have attempted to obtain admission to the bar in those days.

Certainly, as Mr. Wilkes well maintains, the amount of legal knowledge and the use of legal terms manifested in the plays are not of the character that we should expect from one who had held such eminent legal and judicial positions as Lord Bacon. Nor is this, as he shows, the only difficulty. The style of the dramas and that of Bacon's acknowledged writings are utterly different; the conception of thoughts and their clothing in language are both distinct. The ear attuned to Shakspeare finds in Bacon a measure, an adaptation of words, a symmetry of his own, utterly at variance with the dramatist. Wilkes' euphonic test has great weight; and he well and aptly cites Bacon to show that the chancellor made style a test of disputed authorship. If the Baconian theory is but "a bubble which has never floated among the public with any amount of success," it has doubtless found some advocates, and Mr. Wilkes has strengthened the arguments against it.

His argument against Shakspeare as one who worships a lord and

despises the middle and lower classes has but the one fault: that it takes our modern American theories as the test—our theories, and not our practice; for after all personal liberty has, in a certain sense, steadily declined in America during the last century, and many of the rights possessed by individuals in Shakspeare's time, and enjoyed by our ancestors down to the Revolution, have been swept away in the name of liberty, while general and local taxation has reached a point that often amounts practically to confiscation of all revenue, and sometimes of the whole estate. In point of fact, the lower classes among us are more oppressed in person and property by official power, and less able to obtain legal redress, than they were in England in Shakspeare's time. The distinction of rank was then as absolute almost as that of the Hindoo castes, and the contemptuous style of the day in which the aristocratic portion treated their inferiors was caught up too readily by Shakspeare. Mr. Wilkes develops this element steadily through the work, and makes it, as we have seen, the basis of one of his heaviest charges against the dramatist. He treats the point skilfully, and the subject affords a fine scope for discussion. For our own part, we think that he carries his theory too far, and that Shakspeare may find

an advocate who will relieve him from much of the obloquy and secure his claim to respect in America.

Shakspeare literature is now a field so vast, and has won contributions from so many able minds and eloquent pens, that it requires some courage to produce a new work on the topic at large; yet Mr. Wilkes has certainly produced a volume that will take a prominent place among the Shaksperiana. It gives utterance to many new views; the whole treatment, being thoroughly American, is fresh and free from much of the conventional bias that is almost inevitable in England; while solid German learning, by its very seriousness and profundity, seems often to miss the point and *finesse* of the dramatist.

The Catholic part is so prominent that we could not but treat it plainly and frankly, addressing as we do more exclusively a circle of Catholic readers. We do so with no wish to be merely censorious, and with our recognition of the author's evidently careful study and desire to treat the question fairly.

"He presents the volume," he avows, "rather as a series of inquiries than as dogmatic doctrine, and strives," he says, "to support them only by such an amount of controversy as is legitimately due from one who invites the public to a new discussion."

## TALES FROM SHAKSPERE.

By CHARLES LAMB.

### THE TAMING OF THE SHREW.

Katherine, the Shrew, was the eldest daughter of Baptista, a rich gentleman of Padua. She was a lady of such an ungovernable spirit and fiery temper, such a loud-tongued scold, that she was known in Padua by no other name than Katherine the Shrew. It seemed very unlikely, indeed impossible, that any gentleman would ever be found who would venture to marry this lady, and therefore Baptista was much blamed for deferring his consent to many excellent offers that were made to her gentle sister Bianca, putting off all Bianca's suitors with this excuse, that when the eldest sister was fairly off his hands, they should have free leave to address young Bianca.

It happened, however, that a gentleman named Petruchio came to Padua, purposely to look out for a wife, who, nothing discouraged by these reports of Katherine's temper, and hearing she was rich and handsome, resolved upon marrying this famous termagant, and taming her into a meek and manageable wife. And truly none was so fit to set about this herculean labor as Petruchio, whose spirit was as high as Katherine's, and he was a witty and most happy-tempered humorist, and withal so wise, and of such a true judgment, that he well knew how to feign a passionate and furious deportment, when his spirits were so calm that himself could have laughed merrily at his own angry feigning, for his natural temper was careless and easy; the boisterous airs he assumed when he became the husband of Katherine being but in sport, or, more properly speaking, affected by his excellent discernment, as the only means to overcome in her own way the passionate ways of the furious Katherine.

A-courting then Petruchio went to Katherine the Shrew, and first of all he applied to Baptista, her father, for leave to woo his *gentle daughter* Katherine, as Petruchio called her, saying archly, that having heard of her bashful modesty and mild behavior, he had come from Verona to solicit her love. Her father, though he wished her married, was forced to confess Katherine would ill answer this character, it being soon apparent of what manner of gentleness she was composed, for her music-master rushed into the room to complain that the gentle Katherine, his pupil, had broken his head with her lute, for presuming to find fault with her performance; which when Petruchio heard, he said, "It is a brave wench; I love her more than ever, and long to have some chat with her;" and hurrying the old gentleman for a positive answer, he said, "My business is in haste, Signior Baptista, I can not come every day to woo. You knew my father. He is dead, and has left me heir to all his lands and goods. Then tell me, if I get your daughter's love, what dowry you will give with her." Baptista thought his manner was somewhat blunt for a lover; but being glad to get Katherine married, he answered that he would give her twenty thousand crowns for her dowry, and half his estate at his death: so this odd match was quickly agreed on, and Baptista went to apprise his shrewish daughter of her lover's addresses, and sent her in to Petruchio to listen to his suit.

In the meantime Petruchio was settling with himself the mode of courtship he should pursue: and he said, "I will woo her with some spirit when she comes. If she rails at me, why then I will tell her she sings as sweetly as a nightingale; and if she frowns, I will say she looks as clear as roses newly washed with dew. If she will not speak a word, I will praise the eloquence of her language; and if she bids me leave her, I will give her thanks, as if she bid me stay with her a week." Now the stately Katherine entered, and

Petruchio first addressed her with "Good-morrow, Kate, for that is your name, I hear." Katherine, not liking this plain salutation, said disdainfully, "They call me Katherine who do speak to me." "You lie," replied the lover, "for you are called plain Kate, and bonny Kate, and sometimes Kate the Shrew; but, Kate, you are the prettiest Kate in Christendom, and therefore, Kate, hearing your mildness praised in every town, I am come to woo you for my wife."

A strange courtship they made of it. She in loud and angry terms showing him how justly she had gained the name of Shrew, while he still praised her sweet and courteous words, till at length hearing her father coming, he said (intending to make as quick a wooing as possible), "Sweet Katherine, let us set this idle chat aside, for your father has consented that you shall be my wife, your dowry is agreed on, and whether you will or no, I will marry you."

And now Baptista entering, Petruchio told him his daughter had received him kindly, and that she had promised to be married the next Sunday. This Katherine denied, saying she would rather see him hanged on Sunday, and reproached her father for wishing to wed her to such a mad-cap ruffian as Petruchio. Petruchio desired her father not to regard her angry words, for they had agreed she should seem reluctant before him, but that when they were alone, he had found her very fond and loving; and he said to her, "Give me your hand, Kate; I will go to Venice to buy you fine apparel against our wedding day. Provide the feast, father, and bid the wedding guests. I will be sure to bring rings, fine array, and rich clothes, that my Katherine may be fine; and kiss me, Kate, for we will be married on Sunday."

On the Sunday all the wedding guests were assembled, but they waited long before Petruchio came, and Katherine wept for vexation to think that Petruchio had only been making a jest of her. At last, however, he appeared, but he brought none of the bridal finery he had promised Katherine, nor was he dressed himself like a bridegroom, but in strange disordered attire, as if he meant to make a sport of the serious business he came about; and his servant and the very horses on which they rode were in like manner in mean and fantastic fashion habited.

Petruchio could not be persuaded to change his dress; he said Katherine was to be married to him, and not to his clothes; and finding it was in vain to argue with him, to the church they went, he still behaving in the same mad way, for when the priest asked Petruchio if Katherine should be his wife, he swore so loud that she should, that all amazed the priest let fall his book, and as he stooped to take it up, this mad-brained bridegroom gave him such a cuff, that down fell the priest and his book again. And all the while they were being married, he stamped and swore so, that the high-spirited Katherine trembled and shook with fear. After the ceremony was over, while they were yet in the church, he called for wine and drank a loud health to the company, and threw a sop which was at the bottom of the glass full in the sexton's face, giving no other reason for this strange act, than that the sexton's beard grew thin and hungerly, and seemed to ask the sop as he was drinking. Never sure was there such a mad marriage; but Petruchio did but put his wildness on, the better to succeed in the plot he had formed to tame his shrewish wife.

Baptista had provided a sumptuous marriage feast, but when they returned from the church, Petruchio, taking hold of Katherine, declared his intention of carrying his wife home instantly, and no remonstrance of his father-in-law, or angry words of the enraged Katherine, could make him change his purpose; he claimed a husband's right to dispose of his wife as he pleased, and away he hurried Katherine

off: he seeming so fierce and resolute that no one dared to stop him.

Petruchio mounted his wife upon a miserable horse, lean and lank, which he had picked out for the purpose, and himself and his servant no better mounted, they journeyed on through rough and miry ways, and ever when this horse of Katherine's stumbled, he would storm and swear at the poor jaded beast, who could scarce crawl under his burthen, as if he had been the most passionate man alive.

At length, after a weary journey, during which Katherine had heard nothing but the wild ravings of Petruchio at the servant and the horses, they arrived at his house. Petruchio welcomed her kindly to her home, but he resolved she should have neither rest nor food that night. The tables were spread, and supper soon served; but Petruchio, pretending to find fault with every dish, threw the meat about the floor, and ordered the servants to remove it away, and all this he did, as he said, in love for his Katherine, that she might not eat meat that was not well dressed. And when Katherine, weary and supperless, retired to rest, he found the same fault with the bed, throwing the pillows and bed-clothes about the room, so that she was forced to sit down in a chair, where, if she chanced to drop asleep, she was presently awakened by the loud voice of her husband, storming at the servants for the ill-making of his wife's bridal-bed.

The next day Petruchio pursued the same course, still speaking kind words to Katherine, but when she attempted to eat, finding fault with everything that was set before her, throwing the breakfast on the floor as he had done the supper; and Katherine, the haughty Katherine, was fain to beg the servants would bring her secretly a morsel of food, but they, being instructed by Petruchio, replied they dared not give her anything unknown to their master. "Ah," said she, "did he marry me to famish me? Beggars that come to my father's door have food given them. But I, who never knew what it was to entreat for anything, am starved for want of food, giddy for want of sleep, with oaths kept waking, and with brawling fed, and that which vexes me more than all, he does it under the name of perfect love, pretending that if I sleep or eat it were present death to me." Here her soliloquy was interrupted by the entrance of Petruchio; he, not meaning she should be quite starved, had brought her a small portion of meat, and he said to her, "How fares my sweet Kate? Here, love, you see how diligent I am; I have dressed your meat myself. I am sure this kindness merits thanks. What, not a word? Nay, then you love not the meat, and all the pains I have taken is to no purpose." He then ordered the servant to take the dish away. Extreme hunger, which had abated the pride of Katherine, made her say, though angered to the heart, "I pray you let it stand." But this was not all Petruchio intended to bring her to, and he replied, "The poorest service is repaid with thanks, and so shall mine before you touch the meat." On this Katherine brought out a reluctant "I thank you, sir." And now he suffered her to make a slender meal, saying, "Much good may it do your gentle heart, Kate; eat apace! And now, my honey love, we will return to your father's house, and revel it as bravely as the best, with silken coats and caps and golden rings, with ruffs and scarfs and fans and double change of finery;" and to make her believe he really intended to give her these gay things, he called in a tailor and a haberdasher, who brought some new clothes he had ordered for her, and then giving her plate to the servant to take away, before she had half satisfied her hunger, he said, "What! have you dined?" The haberdasher presented a cap, saying, "Here is the cap your worship bespoke;" on which Petruchio began to storm afresh, saying the cap was moulded in a porringer, and that it was no bigger than a cockle or a walnut shell, desiring the haberdasher to take it away and make a bigger. Katherine said,



"I will have this; all gentlewomen wear such caps as these." "When you are gentle," said Petruchio, "you shall have one too, and not till then." The meat Katherine had eaten had a little revived her fallen spirits, and she said, "Why, sir, I trust I may have leave to speak, and speak I will. I am no child, no babe; your betters have endured to hear me say my mind, and if you can not, you had better stop your ears." Petruchio would not hear those angry words, for he had happily discovered a better way of managing his wife than keeping up a jangling argument with her; therefore his answer was, "Why, you say true it is a paltry cap, and I love you for not liking it." "Love me, or love me not," said Katherine, "I like the cap, and I will have this cap or none." "You say you wish to see the gown," said Petruchio, still affecting to misunderstand her. The tailor then came forward, and showed her a fine gown he had made for her. Petruchio, whose intent was that she should have neither cap nor gown, found as much fault with that. "O, mercy heaven!" said he, "what stuff is here! What! do you call this a sleeve? it is like a demicanon, carved up and down like an apple-tart." The tailor said, "You bid me make it according to the fashion of the times;" and Katherine said she never saw a better fashioned gown. This was enough for Petruchio, and privately desiring these people might be paid for their goods, and excuses made to them for the seemingly strange treatment bestowed upon them, he, with fierce words and furious gestures, drove the tailor and the haberdasher out of the room; and then turning to Katherine he said, "Well, come, my Kate, we will go to your father's, even in these mean garments we now wear." And then he ordered his horses, affirming they should reach Baptista's house by dinner time, for that it was but seven o'clock. Now it was not early morning, but the very middle of the day when he spoke this; therefore Katherine ventured to say, though modestly, being almost overcome by the vehemence of his manner, "I dare assure you, sir, it is two o'clock, and will be supper time before we get there." But Petruchio meant that she should be so completely subdued, that she should assent to everything he said, before he carried her to her father; and therefore, as if he were lord even of the sun, and could command the hours, he said it should be what time he pleased to have it before he set forward; "For," said he, "whatever I say or do, you still are crossing it. I will not go to-day, and when I go, it shall be what o'clock I say it is." Another day Katherine was forced to practice her newly-found obedience, and not till he had brought her proud spirit to such a perfect subjection, that she dared not remember there was such a word as contradiction, would Petruchio allow her to go to her father's house; and even while they were upon their journey thither, she was in danger of being turned back again, only because she happened to hint it was the sun, when he affirmed the moon shone brightly at noon-day. "Now, by my mother's son," said he, "and that is myself, it shall be the moon, or stars, or what I list, before I journey to your father's house." He then made as if he were going back again; but Katherine, no longer Katherine the Shrew, but the obedient wife, said, "Let us go forward, I pray, now we have come so far, and it shall be the sun, or moon, or what you please, and if you please to call it a rush-candle henceforth, I vow it shall be so for me." This he was resolved to prove, therefore he said again, "I say it is the moon." "I know it is the moon," replied Katherine. "You lie, it is the blessed sun," said Petruchio. "Then it is the blessed sun," replied Katherine; "but sun it is not when you say it is not. What you will have it named, even so it is, and so it ever shall be for Katherine." Now then he suffered her to proceed on her journey; but further to try if this yielding humor would last, he addressed an old gentleman they met on the road as if he had been a young woman, saying to him, "Good mor-

row, gentle mistress;" and asked Katherine if she had ever beheld a fairer gentlewoman, praising the red and white of the old man's cheeks, and comparing his eyes to two bright stars; and again he addressed him, saying, "Fair, lovely maid, once more good-day to you!" and said to his wife, "Sweet Kate, embrace her for her beauty's sake." The now completely vanquished Katherine quickly adopted her husband's opinion, and made her speech in like sort to the old gentleman, saying to him, "Young budding virgin, you are fair, and fresh, and sweet; whither are you going, and where is your dwelling? Happy are the parents of so fair a child." "Why, how now, Kate," said Petruchio; "I hope you are not mad. This is a man, old and wrinkled, faded and withered, and not a maiden, as you say he is." On this Katherine said, "Pardon me, old gentleman; the sun has so dazzled my eyes, that everything I look on seemeth green. Now I perceive you are a reverend father; I hope you will pardon me for my mad mistake." "Do, good old grandsire," said Petruchio, "and tell us which way you are traveling. We shall be glad of your good company, if you are going our way." The old gentleman replied, "Fair sir, and you my merry mistress, your strange encounter has much amazed me. My name is Vincentio, and I am going to visit a son of mine who lives at Padua." Then Petruchio knew the old gentleman to be the father of Lucentio, a young gentleman who was to be married to Baptista's youngest daughter, Bianca, and he made Vincentio very happy by telling him the rich marriage his son was about to make; and they all journeyed on pleasantly together till they came to Baptista's house, where there was a large company assembled to celebrate the wedding of Bianca and Lucentio, Baptista having willingly consented to the marriage of Bianca when he had got Katherine off his hands.

When they entered, Baptista welcomed them to the wedding-feast, and there was present also another newly-married pair.

Lucentio, Bianca's husband, and Hortensio, the other newly-married man, could not forbear sly jests, which seemed to hint at the shrewish disposition of Petruchio's wife, and these fond bridegrooms seemed highly pleased with the mild tempers of the ladies they had chosen, laughing at Petruchio for his less fortunate choice. Petruchio took little notice of their jokes till the ladies were retired after dinner, and then he perceived Baptista himself joined in the laugh against him; for when Petruchio affirmed that his wife would prove more obedient than theirs, the father of Katherine said, "Now, in good sadness, son Petruchio, I fear you have got the veriest shrew of all." "Well," said Petruchio, "I say no, and therefore for assurance that I speak the truth, let us each one send for his wife, and he whose wife is most obedient to come at first when she is sent for, shall win a wager which we will propose." To this the other two husbands willingly consented, for they were quite confident that their gentle wives would prove more obedient than the headstrong Katherine; and they proposed a wager of twenty crowns, but Petruchio merrily said he would lay as much as that upon his hawk or hound, but twenty times as much upon his wife. Lucentio and Hortensio raised the wager to a hundred crowns, and Lucentio first sent his servant to desire Bianca would come to him. But the servant returned, and said, "Sir, my mistress sends you word she is busy and can not come." "How," said Petruchio, "does she say she is busy and can not come? Is that an answer for a wife?" Then they laughed at him, and said, it would be well if Katherine did not send him a worse answer. And now it was Hortensio's turn to send for his wife, and he said to his servant, "Go and entreat my wife to come to me." "Oh ho! entreat her!" said Petruchio, "Nay, then she needs must come." "I am afraid, sir," said Hortensio, "your wife will not be entreated." But pres-

ently this civil husband looked a little blank, when the servant returned without his mistress; and he said to him, "How now! where is my wife?" "Sir," said the servant, "my mistress says you have some goodly jest in hand, and therefore she will not come. She bids you come to her." "Worse and worse!" said Petruchio; and then he sent his servant, saying, "Sirrah, go to your mistress, and tell her I command her to come to me." The company had scarcely time to think she would not obey his summons, when Baptista, all in amaze, exclaimed, "Now, by my holidame, here comes Katherine!" and she entered, saying meekly to Petruchio, "What is your will, sir, that you send for me?" "Where is your sister and Hortensio's wife?" said he. Katherine replied, "They sit conferring by the parlor fire." "Go, fetch them hither!" said Petruchio. Away went Katherine without reply to perform her husband's command. "Here is a wonder," said Lucentio, "if you talk of a wonder." "And so it is," said Hortensio; "I marvel what it bodes." "Marry, peace it bodes," said Petruchio, "and love, and quiet life, and right supremacy; and, to be short, everything that is sweet and happy." Katherine's father, overjoyed to see this reformation in his daughter, said, "Now, fair befall thee, son Petruchio! you have won the wager, and I will add another twenty thousand crowns to her dowry, as if she were another daughter, for she is changed as if she had never been." "Nay," said Petruchio, "I will win the wager better yet, and show more signs of her new-built virtue and obedience." Katherine now entering with the two ladies, he continued, "See where she comes, and brings your froward wives as prisoners to her womanly persuasion. Katherine, that cap of yours does not become you; off with that bauble, and throw it under foot." Katherine instantly took off her cap and threw it down. "Lord!" said Hortensio's wife, "may I never have a cause to sigh till I am brought to such a silly pass!" And Bianca, she, too, said, "Fie, what foolish duty call you this!" On this Bianca's husband said to her, "I wish your duty were as foolish, too! The wisdom of your duty, fair Bianca, has cost me an hundred crowns since dinner-time." "The more fool you," said Bianca, "for laying on my duty." "Katherine," said Petruchio, "I charge you tell these headstrong women what duty they owe their lords and husbands." And to the wonder of all present, the reformed shrewish lady spoke as eloquently in praise of the wife-like duty of obedience, as she had practiced it implicitly in a ready submission to Petruchio's will. And Katherine once more became famous in Padua, not as heretofore, as Katherine the Shrew, but as Katherine, the most obedient and duteous wife in Padua.

#### ROMEO AND JULIET.

The two chief families in Verona were the rich Capulets and the Montagues. There had been an old quarrel between these families, which was grown to such a height, and so deadly was the enmity between them, that it extended to the remotest kindred, to the followers and retainers of both sides, insomuch that a servant of the house of Montague could not meet a servant of the house of Capulet, nor a Capulet encounter with a Montague by chance, but fierce words and sometimes bloodshed ensued; and frequent were the brawls from such accidental meetings, which disturbed the happy quiet of Verona's streets.

Old lord Capulet made a great supper, to which many fair ladies and many noble guests were invited. All the admired beauties of Verona were present, and all comers were made welcome if they were not of the house of Montague. At this feast of Capulet's Rosaline, beloved of Romeo, son to the old lord Montague, was present; and though it was dangerous for a Montague to be seen in this assembly, yet Benvolio, a friend of Romeo, persuaded the young lord to

go to this assembly in the disguise of a mask, that he might see his Rosaline, and seeing her compare her with some choice beauties of Verona, who, he said, would make him think his swan a crow. Romeo had small faith in Benvolio's words; nevertheless, for the love of Rosaline, he was persuaded to go. For Romeo was a sincere and passionate lover, and one that lost his sleep for love, and fled society to be alone, thinking on Rosaline, who disdained him, and never requited his love with the least show of courtesy or affection; and Benvolio wished to cure his friend of this love by showing him diversity of ladies and company. To this feast of Capulet's then young Romeo with Benvolio and their friend Mercutio went masked. Old Capulet bid them welcome, and told them that ladies who had their toes unplagued with corns would dance with them. And the old man was light-hearted and merry, and said that he had worn a mask when he was young, and could have told a whispering tale in a fair lady's ear. And they fell to dancing, and Romeo was suddenly struck with the exceeding beauty of a lady who danced there, who seemed to him to teach the torches to burn bright, and her beauty to show by night like a rich jewel worn by a blackamoor: beauty too rich for use, too dear for earth! like a snowy dove trooping with crows (he said), so richly did her beauty and perfections shine above the ladies, her companions. While he uttered these praises, he was overheard by Tybalt, a nephew of lord Capulet, who knew him by his voice to be Romeo. And this Tybalt, being of a fiery and passionate temper, could not endure that a Montague should come under the cover of a mask to flier and scorn (as he said) at their solemnities. And he stormed and raged exceedingly, and would have struck young Romeo dead. But his uncle, the old lord Capulet, would not suffer him to do any injury at that time, both out of respect to his guests, and because Romeo had borne himself like a gentleman, and all tongues in Verona boasted of him as a virtuous and well-governed youth. Tybalt, forced to be patient against his will, restrained himself, but swore that this vile Montague should at another time dearly pay for his intrusion.

The dancing being done, Romeo watched the place where the lady stood; and under favor of his masking habit, which might seem to excuse in part the liberty, he presumed in the gentlest manner to take her by her hand, calling it a shrine, which if he profaned by touching it, he was a blushing pilgrim, and would kiss it for atonement. "Good pilgrim," answered the lady, "your devotion shows by far too mannerly and too courtly: saints have hands, which pilgrims may touch, but kiss not." "Have not saints lips, and pilgrims, too?" said Romeo. "Ay," said the lady, "lips which they must use in prayer." "O then, my dear saint," said Romeo, "hear my prayer and grant it, lest I despair." In such like allusions and loving conceits they were engaged, when the lady was called away to her mother. And Romeo, inquiring who her mother was, discovered that the lady whose peerless beauty he was so much struck with, was young Juliet, daughter and heir to the lord Capulet, the great enemy of the Montagues; and that he had unknowingly engaged his heart to his foe. This troubled him, but it could not dissuade him from loving. As little rest had Juliet, when she found that the gentleman that she had been talking with was Romeo and a Montague, for she had been suddenly smit with the same hasty and inconsiderate passion for Romeo, which he had conceived for her; and a prodigious birth of love it seemed to her, that she must love her enemy, and that her affections should settle there, where family considerations should induce her chiefly to hate.

It being midnight, Romeo with his companions departed; but they soon missed him, for unable to stay away from the house where he had left his heart, he leaped the wall of an

orchard which was at the back of Juliet's house. Here he had not been long ruminating on his new love, when Juliet appeared above at a window, through which her exceeding beauty seemed to break like the light of the sun in the east; and the moon, which shone in the orchard with a faint light, appeared to Romeo as if sick and pale with grief at the superior lustre of this new sun. And she, leaning her hand upon her cheek, he passionately wished himself a glove upon that hand, that he might touch her cheek. She, all this while, thinking herself alone, fetched a deep sigh, and exclaimed, "Ah me!" Romeo, enraptured to hear her speak, said softly, and unheard by her, "Oh, speak again, bright angel, for such you appear, being over my head, like a winged messenger from heaven whom mortals fall back to gaze upon." She, unconscious of being overheard, and full of the new passion which that night's adventure had given birth to, called upon her lover by name (whom she supposed absent): "Oh, Romeo, Romeo!" said she, "wherefore art thou Romeo? Deny thy father, and refuse thy name, for my sake; or if thou wilt not, be but my sworn love, and I no longer will be a Capulet." Romeo, having this encouragement, would fain have spoken, but he was desirous of hearing more; and the lady continued her passionate discourse with herself (as she thought) still chiding Romeo for being Romeo and a Montague, and wishing him some other name, or that he would put away that hated name, and for that name, which was no part of himself, he should take all herself. At this loving word Romeo could no longer refrain, but taking up the dialogue as if her words had been addressed to him personally, and not merely in fancy, he bade her call him Love, or by whatever other name she pleased, for he was no longer Romeo, if that name was displeasing to her. Juliet, alarmed to hear Romeo in the garden did not at first know who it was, that by favor of the night and darkness had thus stumbled upon the discovery of her secret; but when he spoke again, though her ears had not yet drunk a hundred words of that tongue's uttering, yet so nice is a lover's hearing, that she immediately knew him to be young Romeo, and she expostulated with him on the danger to which he had exposed himself by climbing the orchard walls, for if any of her kinsmen should find him there, it would be death to him, being a Montague. "Alack," said Romeo, "there is more peril in your eye than in twenty of their swords. Do you but look kind upon me, lady, and I am proof against their enmity. Better my life should be ended by their hate, than that hated life should be prolonged, to live without your love." "How came you into this place?" said Juliet, "and by whose direction?" "Love directed me," answered Romeo; "I am no pilot, yet wert thou as far apart from me as that vast shore which is washed with the farthest sea, I should adventure for such merchandise." A crimson blush came over Juliet's face, yet unseen by Romeo by reason of the night, when she reflected upon the discovery which she had made, yet not meaning to make it, of her love to Romeo. She would fain have recalled her words, but that was impossible: fain would she have stood upon form and have kept her lover at a distance, as the custom of discreet ladies is, to frown and be perverse, and give their suitors harsh denials at first; to stand off, and affect a coyness or indifference, where they most love, that their lovers must not think them too lightly or too easily won: for the difficulty of attainment increases the value of the object. But there was no room in her case for denials, or puttings off, or any of the customary arts of delay and protracted courtship. Romeo had heard from her own tongue, when she did not dream that he was near her, a confession of her love. So with an honest frankness, which the novelty of her situation excused, she confirmed the truth of what he had before heard, and addressing him by the name

of *fair Montague* (love can sweeten a sour name), she begged him not to impute her easy yielding to levity or an unworthy mind, but that he must lay the fault of it (if it were a fault) upon the accident of the night which had so strangely discovered her thoughts. And she added, that though her behavior to him might not be sufficiently prudent, measured by the custom of her sex, yet that she would prove more true than many whose prudence was dissembling, and their modesty artificial cunning.

Romeo was beginning to call the heavens to witness that nothing was farther from his thoughts than to impute a shadow of dishonor to such an honored lady, when she stopped him, begging him not to swear: for although she joyed in him, yet she had no joy of that night's contract; it was too rash, too unadvised, too sudden. But he being urgent with her to exchange a vow of love with him that night, she said that she already had given him hers before he requested it; meaning when he overheard her confession; but she would retract what she then bestowed, for the pleasure of giving it again, for her bounty was as infinite as the sea, and her love as deep. From this loving conference she was called away by her nurse, who slept with her, and thought it time for her to be in bed, for it was near to daybreak; but hastily returning, she said three or four words more to Romeo, the purport of which was, that if his love was indeed honorable, and his purpose marriage, she would send a messenger to him to-morrow, to appoint a time for their marriage, when she would lay all her fortunes at his feet, and follow him as her lord through the world. While they were settling this point, Juliet was repeatedly called for by her nurse, and went in and returned, and went and returned again, for she seemed as jealous of Romeo going from her, as a young girl of her bird, which she will let hop a little from her hand, and pluck it back with a silken thread; and Romeo was as soon to part as she for the sweetest music to lovers is the sound of each other's tongues at night. But at last they parted, wishing mutually sweet sleep and rest for that night.

The day was breaking when they parted, and Romeo, who was too full of thoughts of his mistress and that blessed meeting to allow him to sleep, instead of going home, bent his course to a monastery hard by, to find friar Lawrence. The good friar was already up at his devotions, but seeing young Romeo abroad so early, he conjectured rightly that he had not been a-bed that night, but that some distemper of youthful affection had kept him waking. He was right in imputing the cause of Romeo's wakefulness to love, but he made a wrong guess at the object, for he thought that his love for Rosaline had kept him waking. But when Romeo revealed his new passion for Juliet, and requested the assistance of the friar to marry them that day, the holy man lifted up his eyes and hands in a sort of wonder at the sudden change in Romeo's affections, for he had been privy to all Romeo's love for Rosaline, and his many complaints of her disdain; and he said, that young men's love lay not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes. But Romeo replying that he himself had often chidden him for doting on Rosaline, who could not love him again, whereas Juliet both loved and was beloved by him, the friar assented in some measure to his reasons: and thinking that a matrimonial alliance between young Juliet and Romeo might happily be a means of making up the long breach between the Capulets and the Montagues, which no one more lamented than this good friar, who was a friend to both the families, and had often interposed his mediation to make up the quarrel without effect; partly moved by policy, and partly by his fondness for young Romeo, to whom he could deny nothing, the old man consented to join their hands in marriage.

Now was Romeo blest indeed, and Juliet, who knew his

intent from a messenger which she had dispatched according to promise, did not fail to be; early at the cell of friar Lawrence, where their hands were joined in holy marriage; the good father praying the heavens to smile upon that act, and in the union of this young Montague and young Capulet to bury the old strife and long dissensions of their families.

The ceremony being over, Juliet hastened home, where she stayed impatient for the coming of night, at which time Romeo promised to come and meet her in the orchard, where they had met the night before; and the time between seemed as tedious to her, as the night before some great festival seems to an impatient child, that has got new finery which it may not put on till the morning.

That same day about noon, Romeo's friends, Benvolio and Mercutio, walking through the streets of Verona, were met by a party of the Capulets with the impetuous Tybalt at their head. This was the same angry Tybalt who would have fought with Romeo at old lord Capulet's feast. He seeing Mercutio, accused him bluntly of associating with Romeo, a Montague. Mercutio, who had as much fire and youthful blood in him as Tybalt, replied to this accusation with some sharpness; and in spite of all Benvolio could say to moderate their wrath, a quarrel was beginning, when Romeo himself passing that way, the fierce Tybalt turned from Mercutio to Romeo, and gave him the disgraceful appellation of *villain*. Romeo wished to avoid a quarrel with Tybalt above all men, because he was the kinsman of Juliet, and much beloved by her; besides, this young Montague had never thoroughly entered into the family quarrel, being by nature wise and gentle; and the name of a Capulet, which was his dear lady's name, was now rather a charm to allay resentment, than a watchword to excite fury. So he tried to reason with Tybalt, whom he saluted mildly by the name of *good Capulet*, as if he, though a Montague, had some secret pleasure in uttering that name; but Tybalt, who hated all Montagues with a bitter hatred, would hear no reason, but drew his weapon; and Mercutio, who knew not of Romeo's secret motive for desiring peace with Tybalt, but looked upon his present forbearance as a sort of calm dishonorable submission, with many disdainful words provoked Tybalt to the prosecution of his first quarrel with him; and Tybalt and Mercutio fought, till Mercutio fell, receiving his death's wound while Romeo and Benvolio were vainly endeavoring to part the combatants. Mercutio being dead, Romeo kept his temper no longer, but returned the scornful appellation of villain which Tybalt had given him, and they fought till Tybalt was slain by Romeo. This deadly broil falling out in the midst of Verona at noon-day, the news of it quickly brought a crowd of citizens to the spot, and among them the old lords Capulet and Montague, with their wives; and soon after arrived the prince himself, who, being related to Mercutio, whom Tybalt had slain, and having had the peace of his government often disturbed by these brawls of Montagues and Capulets, came determined to put the law in strictest force against those who should be found to be offenders. Benvolio, who had been eye-witness to the fray, was commanded by the prince to relate the origin of it, which he did, keeping as near to the truth as he could without injury to Romeo, softening and excusing the part which his friends took in it. Lady Capulet, whose extreme grief for the loss of her kinsman Tybalt made her keep no bounds in her revenge, exhorted the prince to do strict justice upon his murderer, and to pay no attention to Benvolio's representation, who, being Romeo's friend, and a Montague, spoke partially. Thus she pleaded against her new son-in-law, but she knew not yet that he was her son-in-law, and Juliet's husband. On the other hand was to be seen Lady Montague pleading for her child's life, and arguing with some justice that Romeo had done nothing worthy of punishment in taking the life of Tybalt, which

was already forfeited to the law by his having slain Mercutio. The prince, unmoved by the passionate exclamations of these women, on a careful examination of the facts pronounced his sentence, and by that sentence Romeo was banished from Verona.

Heavy news to young Juliet, who had been but a few hours a bride, and now by this decree seemed everlastingly divorced! When the tidings reached her, she at first gave way to rage against Romeo, who had slain her dear cousin; she called him a beautiful tyrant, a fiend angelical, a ravenous dove, a lamb with a wolf's nature, a serpent-heart hid with a flowering face, and other like contradictory names, which denoted the struggles in her mind between her love and her resentment; but in the end love got the mastery, and the tears which she shed for grief that Romeo had slain her cousin, turned to drops of joy that her husband lived whom Tybalt would have slain. Then came fresh tears, and they were altogether of grief for Romeo's banishment. That word was more terrible to her than the death of many Tybalts.

Romeo, after the fray, had taken refuge in friar Lawrence's cell, where he was first made acquainted with the prince's sentence, which seemed to him far more terrible than death. To him it appeared there was no world out of Verona's walls, no living out of the sight of Juliet. The good friar would have applied the consolation of philosophy to his griefs, but this frantic young man would hear of none, but like a mad man he tore his hair, and threw himself all along upon the ground, as he said, to take the measure of his grave. From this unseemly state he was roused by a message from his dear lady, which a little revived him, and then the friar took the advantage to expostulate with him on the unmanly weakness which he had shown. He had slain Tybalt, but would he also slay himself, slay his dear lady who lived but in his life? The noble form of man, he said, was but a shape of wax, when it wanted the courage which should keep it firm. The law had been lenient to him, that, instead of death which he had incurred, had pronounced by the prince's mouth only banishment. He had slain Tybalt, but Tybalt would have slain him; there was a sort of happiness in that. Juliet was alive, and (beyond all hope) had become his dear wife; therein he was most happy. All these blessings, as the friar made them out to be, did Romeo put from him like a sullen, misbehaved wench. And the friar bade him beware, for such a despaired (he said) died miserable. Then when Romeo was a little calmed, he counseled him that he should go that night and secretly take his leave of Juliet, and thence proceed straightway to Mantua, at which place he should sojourn till the friar found a fit occasion to publish his marriage, which might be a joyful means of reconciling their families; and then he did not doubt but the prince would be moved to pardon him, and he would return with twenty times more joy than he went forth with grief. Romeo was convinced by these wise counsels of the friar, and took his leave to go and seek his lady, purposing, after he had seen her, to pursue his journey alone to Mantua; to which place the good friar promised to send him letters from time to time, acquainting him with the state of affairs at home.

Romeo gained secret admission to his dear wife's chamber, from the orchard in which he had heard her confession of love the night before. The delight which these lovers took in each other's society, was sadly allayed with the prospect of parting, and the fatal adventures of the past day. The unwelcome day-break seemed to come too soon, and when Juliet heard the morning song of the lark, she would fain have persuaded herself that it was the nightingale, which sings by night; but it was too truly the lark which sung, and a discordant and unpleasant note it seemed to her; and the streaks of day in the east too certainly pointed out that

it was time for these lovers to part. Romeo took his leave of his dear wife with a heavy heart, promising to write to her from Mantua every hour in the day, and when he had descended from her chamber window, as he stood below her on the ground, in that sad foreboding state of mind in which she was, he appeared to her eyes as one dead in the bottom of a tomb. Romeo's mind misgave him in like manner; but now he was forced hastily to depart, for it was death for him to be found within the walls of Verona after daybreak.

This was but the beginning of the tragedy of this pair of star-crossed lovers. Romeo had not been gone many days before the old Lord Capulet proposed a match for Juliet. The husband he had chosen for her, not dreaming that she was married already, was Count Paris, a gallant, young, and noble gentleman, no unworthy suitor to the young Juliet, if she had never seen Romeo.

The terrified Juliet was in a sad perplexity at her father's offer. She pleaded her youth unsuitable to marriage, the recent death of Tybalt, which had left her spirits too weak to meet a husband with any face of joy, and how indecorous it would show for the family of the Capulets to be celebrating a nuptial feast, when his funeral solemnities were hardly over: she pleaded every reason against the match but the true one, namely, that she was married already. But Lord Capulet was deaf to all her excuses, and in a peremptory manner ordered her to get ready, for by the following Thursday she should be married to Paris; and having found her a husband rich, young, and noble, such as the proudest maid in Verona might joyfully accept, he could not bear that out of an affected coyness, as he construed her denial, she should oppose obstacles to her own good fortune.

In this extremity Juliet applied to the friendly friar, always her counselor in distress, and he asked her if she had resolution to undertake a desperate remedy, and she answering that she would go into the grave alive, rather than marry Paris, her own dear husband living; he directed her to go home, and appear merry, and give her consent to marry Paris, according to her father's desire, and on the next night, which was the night before the marriage, to drink off the contents of a phial which he then gave her, the effect of which would be, that for two-and-forty hours after drinking it she should appear cold and lifeless; that when the bridegroom came to find her in the morning, he would find her to appearance dead; that then she should be borne as the manner in that country was, uncovered, on a bier, to be buried in the family vault; that if she could put off womanish fear, and consent to this terrible trial, in forty-two hours after swallowing the liquid (such was its certain operation), she would be sure to awake as from a dream; and before she should awake, he would let her husband know their drift, and he should come in the night and bear her thence to Mantua. Love, and the dread of marrying Paris, gave young Juliet strength to undertake this horrible adventure; and she took the phial of the friar, promising to observe his directions.

Going from the monastery, she met the young count Paris, and, modestly dissembling, promised to become his bride. This was joyful news to the lord Capulet and his wife. It seemed to put youth into the old man; and Juliet, who had displeased him exceedingly by her refusal of the count, was his darling again, now she promised to be obedient. All things in the house were in a bustle against the approaching nuptials. No cost was spared to prepare such festival rejoicings as Verona had never before witnessed.

On the Wednesday night Juliet drank off the potion. She had many misgivings lest the friar, to avoid the blame which might be imputed to him for marrying her to Romeo, had given her poison; but then he was always known for a

holy man; then lest she should awake before the time that Romeo was to come for her; whether the terror of the place, a vault full of dead Capulets' bones, and where Tybalt, all bloody, lay festering in his shroud, would not be enough to drive her distracted; again she thought of all the stories she had heard of spirits haunting the places where their bodies are bestowed. But then her love for Romeo, and her aversion for Paris, returned, and she desperately swallowed the draught, and became insensible.

When young Paris came early in the morning, with music, to awaken his bride, instead of a living Juliet, her chamber presented the dreary spectacle of a lifeless corpse. What death to his hopes! What confusion then reigned through the whole house! Poor Paris lamenting his bride, whom most detestable death had beguiled him of, had divorced from him, even before their hands were joined. But still more piteous it was to hear the mournings of the old lord and lady Capulet, who having but this one, one poor loving child to rejoice and solace in, cruel death had snatched from their sight, just as these careful parents were on the point of seeing her advanced (as they thought) by a promising and advantageous match. Now, all things that were ordained for the festival, were turned from their properties to do the office of a black funeral. The wedding cheer served for a sad burial feast, the bridal hymns were changed to sullen dirges, the sprightly instruments to melancholy bells, and the flowers that should have been strewed in the bride's path, now served but to strew her corpse. Now, instead of a priest to marry her, a priest was needed to bury her; and she was borne to church indeed, not to augment the cheerful hopes of the living, but to swell the dreary numbers of the dead.

Bad news, which always travels faster than good, now brought the dismal story of his Juliet's death to Romeo, at Mantua, before the messenger could arrive who was sent from friar Lawrence to apprise him that these were mock funerals only, and but the shadow and representation of death, and that his dear lady lay in the tomb but for a short while, expecting when Romeo should come to release her from that dreary mansion. Just before, Romeo had been unusually joyful and light-hearted. He had dreamed in the night that he was dead (a strange dream, that gave a dead man leave to think), and that his lady came and found him dead, and breathed such life with kisses in his lips, that he revived, and was an emperor! And now that a messenger came from Verona, he thought surely it was to confirm some good news which his dream had presaged. But when the contrary to this flattering vision appeared, and that it was his lady who was dead in truth, whom he could not revive by any kisses, he ordered horses to be got ready, for he determined that night to visit Verona, and to see his lady in the tomb. And as mischief is swift to enter into the thoughts of desperate men, he called to mind a poor apothecary, whose shop in Mantua he had lately passed, and from the beggarly appearance of the man, who seemed famished, and the wretched show in his shop of empty boxes arranged on dirty shelves, and other tokens of extreme wretchedness, he had said at the time (perhaps having some misgivings that his own disastrous life might haply meet with a conclusion so desperate), "If a man were to need poison, which by the law of Mantua it is death to sell, here lives a poor wretch who would sell it him." These words of his now came into his mind, and he sought out the apothecary, who, after some pretended scruples, Romeo offering him gold which his poverty could not resist, sold him a poison, which, if he swallowed, he told him, if he had the strength of twenty men, would quickly despatch him.

With this poison he set out for Verona, to have a sight of his dear lady in her tomb, meaning, when he had satisfied

his sight, to swallow the poison, and be buried by her side. He reached Verona at midnight, and found the churchyard, in the midst of which was situated the ancient tomb of the Capulets. He had provided a light, and a spade, and wrenching iron, and was proceeding to break open the monument, when he was interrupted by a voice, which by the name of *vile Montague* bade him desist from his unlawful business. It was the young Count Paris, who had come to the tomb of Juliet at that unseasonable time of night to strew flowers, and to weep over the grave of her that should have been his bride. He knew not what an interest Romeo had in the dead, but knowing him to be a Montague, and (as he supposed) a sworn foe to all the Capulets, he judged that he was come by night to do some villainous shame to the dead bodies; therefore in an angry tone he bade him desist, and as a criminal, condemned by the laws of Verona to die if he were found within the walls of the city, he would have apprehended him. Romeo urged Paris to leave him, and warned him by the fate of Tybalt who lay buried there, not to provoke his anger, or draw down another sin upon his head, by forcing him to kill him. But the Count in scorn refused his warning, and laid hands on him as a felon, which Romeo resisting, they fought, and Paris fell. When Romeo, by the help of a light, came to see who it was that he had slain, saw that it was Paris, who (he learned in his way from Mantua) should have married Juliet, he took the dead youth by the hand, as one whom misfortune had made a companion, and said that he would bury him in a triumphal grave, meaning Juliet's grave, which he now opened: and there lay his lady, as one whom death had no power upon to change a feature or complexion in her matchless beauty, or as if death were amorous, and the lean, abhorred monster kept her there for his delight; for she lay yet fresh and blooming, as she had fallen to sleep when she swallowed that benumbing potion; and near her lay Tybalt in his bloody shroud, whom Romeo seeing, begged pardon of his lifeless corpse, and for Juliet's sake called him cousin, and said that he was about to do him a favor by putting his enemy to death. Here Romeo took his last leave of his lady's lips, kissing them; and here he shook the burden of his cross-stars from his weary body, swallowing that poison which the apothecary had sold him, whose operation was fatal and real, not like that dissembling potion which Juliet had swallowed, the effect of which was nearly expiring, and she about to awake to complain that Romeo had not kept his time, or that he had come too soon.

For now the hour was arrived at which the friar had promised that she should awake; and he, having learned that his letters which he had sent to Mantua, by some unlucky detention of the messenger, had never reached Romeo, came himself, provided with a pick-axe and lantern to deliver the lady from her confinement; but he was surprised to find a light already burning in the Capulets' monument, and to see swords and blood near it, and Romeo and Paris lying breathless by the monument.

Before he could entertain a conjecture, to imagine how these fatal accidents had fallen out, Juliet awoke out of her trance, and seeing the friar near her, she remembered the place where she was, and the occasion of her being there, and asked for Romeo; but the friar, hearing a noise, bade her come out of that place of death, and of unnatural sleep; for a greater power than they could contradict had thwarted their intents; and being frightened by the noise of people coming, he fled; but when Juliet saw the cup closed in her true love's hands, she guessed that poison had been the cause of his end, and she would have swallowed the dregs if any had been left, and she kissed his still warm lips to try if any poison yet did hang upon them; then hearing a nearer noise of people coming, she quickly unsheathed a

dagger which she wore, and stabbing herself, died by her true Romeo's side.

The watch by this time had come up to the place. A page belonging to Count Paris, who had witnessed the fight between his master and Romeo, had given the alarm, which had spread among the citizens, who went up and down the streets of Verona confusedly, exclaiming—a Paris, a Romeo, and a Juliet, as the rumor had imperfectly reached them, till the uproar brought Lord Montague and Lord Capulet out of their beds, with the prince, to inquire into the causes of the disturbance. The friar had been apprehended by some of the watch, coming from the churchyard, trembling, sighing, and weeping, in a suspicious manner. A great multitude being assembled at the Capulets' monument, the friar was commanded by the prince to deliver what he knew of these strange and disastrous accidents.

And there, in the presence of the old lords Montague and Capulet, he faithfully related the story of their children's fatal love, the part he took in promoting their marriage, in the hope in that union to end the long quarrels between their families; how Romeo, there dead, was husband to Juliet, and Juliet, there dead, was Romeo's faithful wife; how before he could find a fit opportunity to divulge their marriage, another match was projected for Juliet, who, to avoid the crime of a second marriage, swallowed the sleeping draught (as he advised), and all thought her dead; how meantime he wrote to Romeo to come and take her thence when the force of the potion should cease, and by what unfortunate miscarriage of the messenger the letters never reached Romeo. Farther than this the friar could not follow the story, nor knew more than that, coming himself to deliver Juliet from that place of death, he found the Count Paris and Romeo slain. The remainder of the transactions was supplied by the narration of the page who had seen Paris and Romeo fight, and by the servant who came with Romeo from Verona, to whom this faithful lover had given letters to be delivered to his father in the event of his death, which made good the friar's words, confessing his marriage with Juliet, imploring the forgiveness of his parents, acknowledging the buying of the poison of the poor apothecary, and his intent in coming to the monument to die and lie with Juliet. All these circumstances agreed together to clear the friar from any hand he could be supposed to have had in these complicated slaughters, farther than as the unintended consequences of his own well meant, yet too artificial and subtle contrivances.

And the prince, turning to these old lords, Montague and Capulet, rebuked them for their brutal and irrational enmities, and showed them what a scourge heaven had laid upon such offences, that it had found means even through the love of their children to punish their unnatural hate. And these old rivals, no longer enemies, agreed to bury their long strife in their children's graves; and Lord Capulet requested Lord Montague to give him his hand, calling him by the name of brother, as if in acknowledgment of the union of their families by the marriage of the young Capulet and Montague; and saying that Lord Montague's hand (in token of reconciliation) was all he demanded for his daughter's jointure; but Lord Montague said he would give him more, for he would raise her statue of pure gold, that while Verona kept its name, no figure should be esteemed for its richness and workmanship as that of the true and faithful Juliet. And Lord Capulet in return said that he would raise another statue to Romeo. So did these poor old lords, when it was too late, strive to outgo each other in mutual courtesies; while so deadly had been their rage and enmity in past times, that nothing but the fearful overthrow of their children (poor sacrifices to their quarrels and dissensions) could remove the rooted hates and jealousies of the noble families.